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Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics

Background document
Available in English only

Caribbean Roadmap for the Transformation Agenda

Prepared by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON THE TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

I. PREAMBLE TO CARIBBEAN ROADMAP FOR THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

Following the High-level consultation of Heads of National and International Statistical Organisations in New York in January 2015, countries committed to continue the process of establishing a sustainable framework for the national, regional and global statistical systems on the modernization efforts through five thematic areas. These areas focus on the components of the widely adopted Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics. Over recent years much work has been achieved and efforts continue towards the desired results. The cross cutting thematic areas are Coordination, Communication and Advocacy, Integration, Innovation and Capacity-building.

Among the decisions of the Forty-Seventh Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (47th UNSC) on the Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics were that the 47th UNSC:

- Reconfirmed the necessity to modernize and strengthen statistical systems, at the national, regional and global levels, built around standards-based architecture and taking into account national specificities, in order to respond more effectively and efficiently to the needs of emerging users, and in particular to address the data demand in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related initiatives;
- Encouraged the completion of the series of regional conferences and the formulation of regional road maps for a transformative agenda through the moderation of the five thematic areas described in the report and by taking stock of existing programmes and activities for integrating and modernizing statistical systems in close consultation with member countries, regional commissions and agencies and other stakeholders, and by eventually mobilizing funds and sharing innovative technology, know-how and good practices;

Meanwhile, the Thirty-Seventh Regular Meeting of Heads of Government (37th HGC) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which was held in Georgetown, Guyana in July 2016 endorsed the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean which was prepared by the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) and presented to the 37th HGC by the Member State of Grenada. In fact, this Action Plan should have been on the Agenda of the Intersessional Meeting of Heads that was held in February 2016. The Action Plan for Statistics was developed in the context of the Data Revolution required to strengthen the National Statistical Offices and Systems to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and similar national, regional and international initiatives, arising from the recommendations of the Second High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics (2nd HLF) held in Grenada in May 2014.

The Caribbean Conference on the Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics which took place in Barbados during 7-9 September 2016 was therefore timely given the high level endorsement of statistics in CARICOM championed by the Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. The Right Honourable Keith C. Mitchell, who while giving the feature address at the 2nd HLF volunteered to be an advocate for statistics in CARICOM.

The significance of the five thematic areas as it pertains to the work already in progress/completed in the region follows.

Coordination

Coordination has always been the approach used within the Caribbean Community in the development of statistics. The work of the SCCS which was established in 1974 and the long history of implementation of regionally coordinated census strategies are prime examples of coordination. The efforts at coordination resulted in the high level political endorsement and adoption of an Action Plan for the development of statistics which includes data driven decision making at the highest level of CARICOM countries. This initiative, has been in the making in CARICOM since 2005 (preparatory phase) before the formal adoption of the global transformative agenda.

Such high level endorsement strengthens the national statistical system and further empowers the leadership of the National Statistical Office (NSO) to effectively coordinate statistical processes. It also guarantees adequate resources for statistical programs within the NSDS framework that is being developed in collaboration with PARIS21 and the monitoring of the SDGs in collaboration with regional and global coordinating agencies. Coordination is also reinforced, given the endorsement of the regional approach to the development of statistics in the Action Plan.

Statistical outputs have been and will continue to be built on collaborative partnerships with data communities, users and other stakeholders to ensure harmonisation of methodologies, value realisation, resource maximisation and continued advocacy.

Communication and Advocacy

Communication and advocacy are continuously being improved by existing strategies and initiatives. This thematic area further enable the transformation and modernisation of statistics as reflected in the annual commemoration of Caribbean Statistics Day, the formation of the Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians, and advocacy at the highest level of the Community. It is also imperative that high level advocates and champions are expanded and existing ones sustained for the transformative agenda along with support from advocacy agencies such as PARIS 21.

Effective communication strategies and opportunities must be maintained and encouraged by public and private dialogue with key partners, the media and the civil society, National Statistical/Inter-agency Committees, Advisory Committees, Press Releases, Press Conferences, User-Producer seminars etc. Therefore, establishing communication and advocacy units within NSOs with added support from regional and global agencies, is a major element for achieving results, namely high quality statistics to be provided to decision makers in a timely manner.

Integration

Integration of the national statistical systems within the legal environment, coordination and communication and ICT infrastructures, resource availability and capacity are necessary for effecting the transformative agenda. Within such an integration model National Statistical Councils can be established to further enable the transformation process. This mechanism will make possible the access for data from the most reliable sources in a timely manner while decreasing production costs and enhancing the quality of final deliveries. Integration is also essential for the evaluation of data production - their standards and processes through globally recognised practices such as the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS), the CARICOM Code of Good Statistical Practices and statistical domains presented in Statistical Legislature or Bills. The CARICOM Model Bill developed and endorsed by the SCCS caters for the establishment of an integrated national statistical system and specifically for the access to administrative data from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) for statistical purposes [only].

Innovation

Innovation is inevitable in the transformative process and more so for *e-transformation*. Innovation has increased the production process and improved the effectiveness within and across national and regional statistical systems. Such innovation has occurred in the dissemination of Economic Statistics, Censuses and Surveys, Social, Environment Statistics and the MDGs. Innovation also encompasses the adaptation of existing innovative tools for the SDGs production. The Action Plan for Statistics recognized the power of ICT in statistics production including calling for the conduct of IT needs assessment and the provision of state of the art IT equipment and software. The following is considered for further usage of such technologies and are also reflected in the conclusions:

- The application of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA)
- The establishment of common national data and metadata portals, open standards based web portals and the mainstreaming of SDMX and related standards functionality across countries/regionally
- The innovative and transformational power of ICT and mobile devices for geo-referenced data collection and data visualization
- The implementation of the open data concept and explore practices of cloud computing for official statistics and research purposes
- The implementation of an interoperable network of national, regional and global platforms of data, services and applications through and public-private partnerships making use of key tools (Jamaica-eDacs/Survey Solutions)

Capacity-building

Capacity-building is fundamental to effectively achieving the goals of the Transformative Agenda and to execute the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean. In essence, national and external resources should be made available to strategically address the capacity needs and the resource gaps. In addition to providing the resources, the need to prioritise and effectively coordinate capacity-building efforts are of utmost importance to meeting the targeted goals and in eliminating the duplication of efforts. Capacity-building also ensures the sustainability of the Action Plan and its work processes and programmes.

Non-state actors must participate and contribute in and to statistical activities through financing. Training is critical and the recommendations incorporated in the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean as endorsed by the 37th HGC must be adopted. These recommendations include identification of training in statistics for staff of the NSOs and NSSs with consideration of awards of scholarships; enabling the training of statisticians as data scientists and ensuring that statistics as a data science, data analysis and IT are included in an integrated manner in the education curricula at all levels. Regional universities should offer short-term training in statistics.

Capacity building should also include continuous training in key areas of Statistics particularly for a targeted number of officers. Appropriate skills, knowledge and competency analysis should be undertaken within national statistical offices to determine the requirements to sustain current and planned programs.

In sum, these five thematic areas may necessitate the restructuring of national statistical offices to achieve set goals. The Action Plan endorsed by the 37th HGC is to be reconciled with the recommendations from this conference to have a clear picture of where we need to go and what we need to do in CARICOM.

II. Overview of Strategic Plan

Strategic Area 1: Coordination at and between global, regional and national statistical systems

Key Actions:

- *Continue the momentum already started in the Caribbean Community of making operational the high-level political endorsement and commitment for data-driven decision-making including through the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean and by deepening the integration of the SDG framework in regional and national development priorities, programmes and planning mechanisms*
- *Strengthen the National Statistical Systems (NSS) and enhance the key coordinating and leadership role of the NSOs in the NSS through gaining endorsement at the highest level, financing and implementing the NSDS framework across countries in collaboration with PARIS21*
- *Establish new institutional mechanisms and initiatives as well as make use of existing forum/models (such as SCCS/AGS/SCA) for facilitating, monitoring and reporting on the modernization and transformation processes at global, regional and national levels*
- *Build collaborative partnerships with data communities, users and other stakeholders to ensure harmonization of methodologies, efficiency gains and the avoidance of duplication*

Strategic Area 2: Communication and Advocacy

Key Actions:

- *Strengthen the communication and advocacy programmes and activities within countries and across the region including facilitating a Communication (Public Relations and Information) unit within NSOs where feasible and make use of opportunities under the Programme for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC).*
- *Develop regional and national communication strategies and build on existing advocacy initiatives on the value of official statistics to enable the transformation and modernisation of statistics (Caribbean Statistics Day, Advocacy at the highest level of the Community)*
- *Develop and implement educational programmes to increase data literacy, provide statistical products as feedback to the data communities and empower institutions and individuals to use statistics effectively in their own decisions*
- *Continue to make use and cultivate additional high level advocates/champions for official statistics, with the support of PARIS21*
- *Develop effective communication strategies and guidelines and identify opportunities for training in communication and encourage public and private dialogue oriented to policy-makers, legislators, the media, the peoples of our Community*

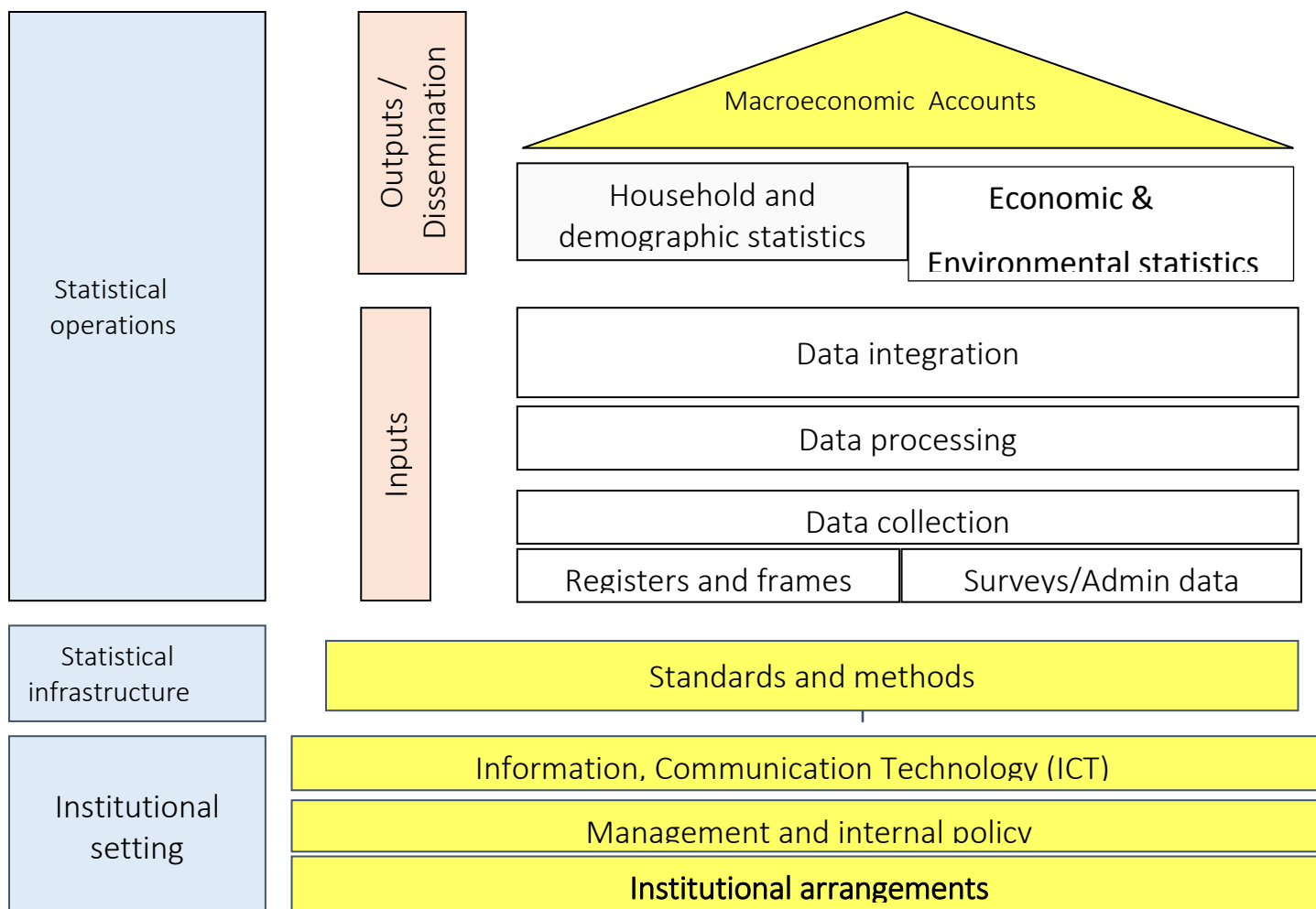
Strategic Area 3: Integrated statistical systems for data collection, processing and dissemination

Key Actions:

Institutional setting

- *Develop the institutional arrangements and governance schemes that are needed to address the modernization and integration of the NSS including the legal environment, coordination and governance arrangements, ICT network infrastructure, human resource development and the financial resources*
- *Establish/make use of National Statistical Councils to enhance the modernisation and transformation process*
- *Develop mechanisms needed to facilitate timely collection of source data from administrative records and from surveys and censuses*
- *Develop an appropriate reorganization strategy based on a corporate business architecture initiative to implement sound organizational and management restructuring processes (quality assurance, code of good statistical practices- FPOS-based, Model Bill) for the NSO*

Integrated Statistics Approach



Statistical operations

- *Strengthen and expand regionally and internationally supported basic data programmes like the household survey programmes, business and other economic survey programmes, population and housing census programme, civil registration and vital statistics program and the International Comparison Program.*
- *Undertake assessments, mapping and streamlining of statistical production processes aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness*
- *Strengthen the registers of businesses, and the use of and micro data linking of administrative records, negotiating access to and building strategic relationships with Big data and enabling the incorporation of geospatial data in the multi-source and multi-mode production processes*

Standards and methods

- *Implement standards methods including the 2008 SNA, the BPM6, ISIC Rev 4, GSBPM – Generalised Statistical Business Process Model; and Quality Assurance frameworks*

Strategic Area 4: Innovation and modernization through standard-based statistical business architecture

Key Actions:

- *Promote the standardization of production processes aimed at sharing and re-using innovative tools and technologies (interoperability) within and across national and regional statistical systems including adaptations of existing processes for SDG production.*
- *Support the development and application of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA).*
- *Promote the establishment of common national data and metadata portals, open standards based web portals and mainstream SDMX and related standards functionality across countries/regionally.*
- *Harness the innovative and transformational power of ICT and mobile devices for geo-referenced data collection and data visualization.*
- *Implement the open data concept and explore practices of cloud computing for official statistics and research purposes.*
- *Implement an interoperable network of national, regional and global platforms of data, services and applications through public-private partnerships making use of key tools (Jamaica-eDacs/survey solutions).*

Strategic Area 5: Capacity building and resource mobilization

Key Actions:

- *Identify and coordinate domestic and external resources to strategically address the capacity needs, identify resource gaps and to set priorities.*

- *Create opportunities for participation of non-state actors in funding statistical activities through innovative financing mechanisms using means consistent with the FPOS.*
- *Implement the recommendations on training incorporated in the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean as endorsed by the 37th HGC including: Identification of training in statistics for staff of the NSOs and NSS with priority given to the award of scholarships by Governments/IDPs and to enable the training of statisticians as data scientists to make more effective use of IT and Statistics.*
- *Enable a strategic programme on training and capacity building for successful transformation of NSOs/NSS and which should have a clear and direct link to succession planning.*
- *Undertake a gap analysis to determine the skills and competencies that are required to sustain the current and planned programs.*
- *Develop closer collaboration with regional universities to enable short-term training in statistics*
- *Assess the institutional, organizational and technical readiness of national statistical systems to move to the next level of maturity in regards to modernization making use of available assessment tools.*
- *Provide recommendations in national strategies (e.g. NSDS) for the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems and prepare national statistical plans to assist countries in their implementations.*
- *Complement traditional technical training methods at national, regional and global levels by leveraging existing and establishing new e-learning platforms.*
- *Undertake training programs in non-technical areas such as on change management and innovative technology and enable standards for collection, processing and dissemination.*
- *Explore opportunities for pooling human resources and information technology within and across national statistical systems including South-South Cooperation and Centres of Excellence in NSOs.*
- *Provide special attention to the needs for building up sound and resilient NSSs in SIDS, LDCs, land locked countries and fragile states.*

III. Immediate Next Steps

- Create Drafting Group to prepare Preamble and finalise draft conclusions (completed)
- Submit Conclusions (Power-point format) to the UNSD.
- Establish Caribbean Group on the Transformation Agenda for Official Statistics- Member States identified are:
 - AGS Members: Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Bermuda
 - Non- AGS Members: Dominica and British Virgin Islands, Bahamas
 - Regional and International Agencies: Statistics Canada (expressed interest), UNSD, CARICOM, [to check other organisations/confirm] ECLAC

IV. Next steps and the way forward

Reports to the Statistical Commission and regional statistical committees

- March 2016: Interim report ([E/CN.3/2016/4](#))
- November 2016: Consultation of Global Action Plan and Regional Action Plan
- January 2017: UN World Data Forum, Cape Town, South Africa
- March 2017: Final report to UNSC, including concrete proposal for the drafting and implementing national and regional action plans on the Transformative Agenda for data, statistics and innovation

Guidance

- High Level Group on Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building (under the UN Statistical Commission)
- Statistical Committees of Regional Commissions and regional agencies

Annex I. Linking the Transformative Agenda to the Action Plan for Statistics – Broad Areas

Action Plan For Statistics	Transformation Agenda Themes
Issue 1: Governments should undertake the strengthening of the National Statistical Systems (NSS) and specifically the National Statistical Offices (NSO):	Integrated Statistical systems: Data collection, Processing and Dissemination of Integrated Statistics
	Coordination of statistical systems
	Communication and Advocacy
	Training and Capacity Building
	Innovation and Modernization through Standards-Based Statistical Business Architecture
Issue 2: Governments should pursue the upgrading of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) base	Innovation and Modernization through Standards-Based Statistical Business Architecture
	Training and Capacity Building
	Communication and Advocacy
	Communication and Advocacy
Issue 3: Promoting of careers in Statistics should be undertaken by Governments – embedding statistics as a [data] science in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools and enabling scholarships at the tertiary level	Training and Capacity Building
Issue 4: Governments should endorse and promote the Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians (CAPS)	Communication and Advocacy
Issue 5: Governments should support a regional approach to the development of statistics to optimise scarce resources in the strengthening of the NSS	Coordination at and between the Global and Regional Statistical System
	Training and Capacity Building
	Communication and Advocacy

Annex II. Comparison strategic areas between transformative agenda and global action plan

